

A HISTORY OF THE TAXONOMY AND A CATALOG  
OF RED AND WHITE CURRANTS

by

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B. S., Kansas State University, 1964

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A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Botany

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas  
1967

Approved by:

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A HISTORY OF THE TAXONOMY AND A CATALOG  
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INTRODUCTION

Currants and gooseberries have not been as extensively treated by horticultural taxonomists as have most other commercial fruit species. There are at least two reasons for this apparent neglect.

The first, and possibly the more important, reason is the small commercial acreage of currants and gooseberries. The 1959 census listed 393 acres of currants raised commercially in New York, the State containing nearly all of the commercial acreage (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1959).

The second reason for avoiding a treatment of Ribes cultivars is the tremendously confused nomenclature. The great number of names in the literature suggests a greater antiquity for this group than is actually the case. Nomenclatural problems increased with the introduction of new currant and gooseberry cultivars during the last half of the nineteenth century.

Soon after this study was begun, it became clear that a greater limitation of the subject was necessary. This work covers the history and description of only the red and the white currant cultivars.

To conclude this introduction, I quote from a paper given by Harlan P. Kelsey before the American Pomological

Society and recorded in the Proceedings for 1940:

"Anyone who accepts an invitation to discuss such a tremendous topic as Nomenclature--even though it be confined as narrowly as possible to plants and plant products--either should be at one and the same time a trained philologist, lexicologist, taxonomist, systematist, and expert botanist and horticulturist, or be possessed of amazing temerity. The former, unequivocally, I am not, so I must perforce confess to the latter."

#### HISTORY OF NAMES

##### Etymology of the Word Currant

The following information on the etymology of the word currant is taken from the Oxford English Dictionary (1933).

In 1334, the earliest form of the word appeared in Agriculture and Prices by Rogers. It appeared as "Raisins de Corauntz." The name was applied to the grapes of Corinth (Vitis sp.) raised in the Levant and later on the island of Zante. In the years that followed 1334, the name was spelled in various ways: raysons of Currante (Warner, ca. 1390); raysons of coraunce (Mann. & Hausch, 1463); Raisons of Corans (Bulleyn, 1562); Corantes, Raysens of Corinthe (Dodeens, 1578); Raisins of Corinth, Currants (Venner, 1620); Curran (Moffet & Bennet, 1655).

In 1578, the first form of currant applied to Ribes appeared in Lyte's translation of Dodocens' herbal as "Bastard Corinthes" (p. 683). Parkinson (1629) used "currans." Grew (1671, 1677) referred to the seed of "A White Corin." J. Phillips (1708) called the fruits of Ribes "Corinths." The first use of the present spelling of the word currant applied to Ribes was by Batty Langley in his Pomona (1729) (cf. Hedrick, 1925). Apparently, the present spelling was adopted rather uniformly during the 1780's and '90's. In 1783, Johnson wrote to Boswell: "I would plant a great many currants: the fruit is good." H. Meister (1799) used currant in its present spelling. Since that time the English spelling has been uniform.

From the evidence, it is clear that confusion of the Corinth grape (Vitis sp.) with the Ribes fruit occurred in Europe and the British Isles.

#### Etymology of the Word Ribes

The genus name, Ribes, first appeared in the Arabian Serapio (Gerarde, 1633). Alphonse De Candolle (1886) discounted the possibility of the Arabian name being linked to currant or gooseberry plants. It would seem more logical for the generic name to be derived from Northern Europe than from Arabia. De Candolle also cited a dictionary by Ménage which gives the old French names for currant. At Rouen, they were called garies, at Caen grades, in Lower Normandy gradilles, and in Anjou castilles. The meaning of the French

names is indicated by the meaning given in Legonidee's dictionary, where gardis means rough, harsh, pungent, coarse, etc. The terms castilles and Kastiles cause taxonomists some trouble. Some, like Legonidee, associated it with Castille, or Spain, but currants would not be likely to have a name derived from a country where they seldom grow.

Bunyard gave a short account of the geography of the parent species (1916-17). Ribes vulgare Lamarck is native to western Europe: France, Belgium, and Great Britain. Ribes rubrum Linnaeus has a somewhat wider range. It is native to northern, central, and eastern Europe and Asia: Scandinavia, Poland, Prussia, Russia, Siberia, and Manchuria. Ribes petraeum Wulfen occurs in the high mountains of Europe, North Africa, and Siberia.

Hedrick (1925) claimed that Holland, Denmark, and the plains of the Baltic were probably the first areas of cultivation. The names of the earliest cultivars known to us-- Red Dutch and White Dutch---appear to bear out this idea. The abundance of Slavic names for the currant mentioned by De Candolle (1886) indicates another possibility for an early region of cultivation. The presence of Ribes species in Russia (the Caucasus, Transcaucasia, Armenia, and Georgia) indicates possible center of cultivation at an early date, although no other evidence is available.



## ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF CURRANT CULTIVARS

## Descriptions from the Herbals

The first reference to the currant (Ribes spp. not Vitis sp.) appeared during the early fifteenth century in a German manuscript. Although Bunyard (1916-17) and Thayer (1923) both mentioned this early manuscript, they did not give a title or excerpt. The Mainz Herbarius (1484) contains a good discussion of the red currant (Hedrick, 1925). Its reputed medicinal properties gave it a place in the herb gardens of central and northern Europe, but the description indicates no improvement of the species in cultivation (Hedrick, 1925). It was Hedrick's opinion that the native species of northern France, Germany, and Austria were not cultivated for fruit, but this is open to question. Since the native range of R. vulgare includes France and the range of R. rubrum includes Russia, limited cultivation for the fruit was possible. Leonhard Fuchs included a figure of the red currant in the 1542 edition of his herbal. This appears to be a poor specimen of the "Common Red," as it was known at the time (Hedrick, 1925). Tragus figured a similar currant specimen in 1552 (Hedrick, 1925). Figures of superior plants began to appear around 1571. Red Dutch, the oldest variety on record, was apparent in the present form by 1578.

The first English reference occurred in Lyte's translation of Dodoens' herbal (1578). John Parkinson described red, white and black currants in his herbal (1629). The

following excerpt is the part applying to the red and white currants:

"Ribes rubra, alba,...Currans red, white,...

"The red Curran is both of two sorts, and groweth to the height of a man, having sometimes a stem of two inches thickness, and divers arms and branches, several with a smooth, dark, brownish bark, without any prick or thorn at all upon any part thereof, whereon do grow large cornered blackish green leaves, cut in on the edges, seeming to be made of five parts, almost like a Vine leaf, the edges a little pointing out, and standing one above another and on both sides of the branches: the flowers are little and hollow, coming forth at the joints of the leaves, growing many together on a long stalk, hanging down above a finger's length and of an herby color: after which come small round fruits or berries, green at first, and red as a Cherry when they are ripe, of a pleasant and tart taste; the other differeth not in any other thing than in the berries, being twice as big as the former: the root is woody and spreadeth diversely.

"The White Curran Bush riseth usually both higher than the red and straighter and more upright, bigger also in the stemme and covered with a white



bark; the leaves are cornered, somewhat like the former, but not so large; the flowers are small and hollow like the other, hanging down in the same manner on long stalkes, somewhat thicker set together, and of a clear white colour, with a little black head, so transparent that the seeds may be easily seen thorough (sic) them, and of a more pleasant winie (sic) taste than the red by much."

The "two sorts" of red currant mentioned by Parkinson probably include the native species and the Red Dutch, introduced in the literature 22 years before. Parkinson's reference to the cultivated white currant is the first English description of this color variant. John Gerarde, in the second edition of his herbal (1633) broadened the description with additional details:

"The plant which carries the fruit which we commonly term red Currans is a shrubby bush of the bignesse (sic) of a Gooseberry bush, but without prickles; the wood is soft and white with a pretty large pith in the middle; it is covered with a double bark, the undermost, being the thicker, is green, and the uppermost, which sometimes chaps and pills off, is of a brownish colour and smooth; the bark of the yongest (sic) shoots is whitish and rough; the leavesse (sic) which grow on foot-stalkes (sic) some two inches long, are somewhat

like Vine leaves, but smaller by much, and lesse (sic) cornered, being cut into three, and sometimes, but seldom, cut into five parts, somewhat thicker, with many veins running over them, greener above than they are below; out of the branches in Spring time grow stalkes (sic) hanging down some six inches in length carrying many little greenish flowers, which are succeeded by little red berries, clear and smoothe (sic), of the bignesse (sic) of the Whortle berries, of a pleasant tart taste. Of this kinde (sic) there is another, only differing from this in the fruit, which is twice as big as that of the common kinde (sic).

"2. The bush which bears the white Currans is commonly straighter and bigger than the former; the leaves are lesser, the flowers whiter, and so also is the fruit, being clear and transparent, with a little blackish rough end.

"3. Besides these three is another which differs little from the former in shape, yet grows somewhat higher, and hath lesser leaves; the flowers are of a purplish green colour, and are succeeded by fruit as bigge (sic) again as the ordinary red, but of a stinking and somewhat loathing savour; the leaves also are not without this stinking smell."

Gerarde's presentation indicates that closer ana-

tomical observations had been made after the currant was brought into cultivation, leading to those observations on the stem of the red currants. The third sort is somewhat of an enigma. The references to purplish green flowers and stinking leaves and fruit indicates a black currant, but the comparison of fruit size with the "ordinary red" indicates a red currant.

William Coles published The History of Plants (1657) in London. His discussion of names deserves mention. Ribes and Ribesius frutex were names applied to the currant regardless of the color of fruit. Grossularia Rubra and G. ultramarina were names for the red currant, although the latter name may have included several species. Translated, G. ultramarina means "over-the-sea gooseberry." This name, according to some authors (cf. Hedrick, 1925), implies its origin in northern Europe, beyond the Baltic. The white currant, occurring sporadically in red-fruited populations, was named G. hortensis margaritis similis by Bauhin (Coles, 1657). In Kent, the name for the white currant was Gazell (Coles, 1657).

#### Confusion of Names

Confusion of Ribes cultivar names began in 1778, 49 years after Langley's Pomona was published. Mawe's dictionary of gardening and botany listed ten varieties, four ornamental and six varieties grown for their fruit (Hedrick, 1925). The edible varieties included Common Small Red Currant,

Long-bunched Red, Champagne Pale-red, Large Red Dutch, Common Small White, and Large White Dutch. The possibilities for error, even with this limited number, were sufficient to cause complaints from growers. The Catalogue of Fruits Cultivated in the Garden of the Royal Horticultural Society of London (1826) listed 35 species and varieties (Hedrick, 1925). About 20 of these were widely grown. Confusion again appeared in such names as Large Bunched Red, Long Bunched Red, Red Dutch--Large, Red Dutch-New, Jeeves's White, Morgan's White, Sperry's White, Pearl White, Small White, White Dutch, and White Dutch--New. In 1866, Hogg listed only nine varieties. Six of these were recommended by him for commercial production (Hedrick, 1925). Andrew S. Fuller (1867) was the first American to attempt a solution to the nomenclature problem (Hedrick, 1925). He listed 28 species with over 40 synonyms. Buist's Long-bunched Red and Dana's White were American varieties, according to his classification. When he attempted to obtain Dana's White from nurserymen, however, he received five distinct varieties--all sold as Dana's White!

The last 30 years of the nineteenth century represented the "Golden Age of Currant" in the United States. The tremendous expansion of interest in this fruit during that period led to the production of several well-known varieties: Wilder, North Star, Red Cross, Eclipse, Ruby, and Pomona. New York Station Bulletin 95 (Beach, 1895) reflects this surge in selection and breeding. It lists 93 varieties of

red, white, and black currants, both native and introduced. Fred Card's Bush Fruits (1898) lists 58 varieties grown in America (Hedrick, 1925). Twenty-five of these were of American origin, and not all of them were in commercial cultivation.

#### CATALOG OF THE CULTIVATED VARIETIES OF RED AND WHITE CURRANTS: HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

This list of cultivar names has been gleaned from horticultural journals, agricultural reports and bulletins, general-agriculture magazines, and transactions of state horticultural societies. Although nurseries were mentioned frequently in the discussions, their catalogs were not accessible for direct reference.

This list is a bibliography of nomenclature and a literature survey rather than an assessment of morphological and pomological variation. Hopefully, it will provide a firm base for additional taxonomic investigation of these cultivars.

All of the varieties listed in this catalog are (or were) grown in North America or western Europe.

#### Admirable

This is a red variety described in Exp. Farms (Can.) Rept. (Sharpe, 1897).

Admirable is described as a vigorous variety bearing large fruit in rather long clusters. The fruit is very



mildly acid and has a good flavor. It is a moderately productive variety, ripening its fruit around June 25.

#### Attractor

This white-fruited French variety was originated a few years before 1854. It was described by P. Barry (1854) as a distinct new variety. In 1856 it was cataloged by Ellwanger & Barry (Thayer, 1923).

The growth of the bush is feeble to moderately vigorous. The leaves are deeply lobed and sharply serrate. The fruit is large, about the size of White Grape, and of much the same type. See White Grape for description of fruit.

#### Bailey's Sweet White

The only mention of this variety appears in the Report of the Minnesota Horticultural Society (Smith, 1876-77), but no description is given.

#### Bar le Duc

A small French town gave this variety its name. It was described in 1896 by J. J. Bourcart (Thayer, 1923).

The bush is erect and it requires a sunny location. The leaves have a wavy crinkly texture. Fruit is large, white, and sweet, borne in clusters of 12-14. Each berry contains 2-4 seeds. Bourcart judged this variety as not commercially desirable.



## Belle de Fontenay

W. R. Prince listed this name in the Rural New-Yorker (Prince, 1859), but again no description was given. Fortunately, a description was included in the Fruits of Ontario, 1914 (Thayer, 1923).

The bush is spreading, upright, of medium vigor. The bunch is large and compact, composed of large, red, subacid berries of excellent quality. Fruit ripens in midseason. Bunyard (1917) noted that a synonym, Schoene Von St. Gilles, is sometimes used. Also, Bunyard pointed out that this variety resembles Versailles, except for the longer and tighter bunches of Belle de St. Gilles. A tendency toward "blindness" (failure of flower buds to break and produce racemes) disqualifies it from commercial planting.

## Benwell

This is a minor red variety, mentioned in Exp. Farms (Can.) Rept. (Macoun, 1899). At that time, the plants had been in the experimental plots for only one or two seasons. For that reason, no description was given.

## Bertin's Early

B. M. Watson, Plymouth, Mass., cataloged this variety in 1855 (Thayer, 1923), but no description was given.

### Bertin's Seedling

L. W. Puffer, North Bridgewater, Mass., described this variety as "red, very large" in the 1863 issue of his trade catalog. The American Pomological Society (APS) cataloged it in 1869 (Thayer, 1923).

### Bertin No. 9

The James Veitch & Sons catalog for 1870 described Bertin No. 9 as "excellent" (Thayer, 1923).

### Bertin No. 31

James Veitch & Sons, never notably verbose, described this variety as "very fine" in 1870 (Thayer, 1923).

### Blanche Perice

W. R. Prince listed this as a French variety (obviously enough!) in the Rural New-Yorker (Prince, 1859), but he included no description.

### Boston Lady

From the meager evidence available, it is likely that this variety originated during the 1850's. An excerpt from the Michigan Farmer is quoted in Gardener's Monthly (Anonymous, 1860).

"At a meeting of the Illinois Horticultural Society, Mr. Ordway described the Boston Lady Currant as a white

variety, the fruit of which was not only unusually large, but also bearing double the quantity of other kinds. He has seen the currants taken of a single stock of 12 inches fill a quart measure. They are also very fine flavored, greater than common, but a little later in ripening."

#### Boulogne Large White

W.R. Prince & Co. cataloged this variety in 1860-61 (Thayer, 1923).

#### Boulogne Red

B. M. Watson, Plymouth, Mass., described this variety as bearing "superb fruit" in the catalog for 1855 (Thayer, 1923).

#### Brandenburger

Brandenburger is a white currant. Bushes vigorous, productive, bearing medium-size clusters of large fruit. Fruit mildly acid, good, ripening around June 25. (Sharpe, 1897).

#### Brayley

This description is quoted from Fruits of Ontario, 1906 (Thayer, 1923).

"Bush upright, spreading, vigorous, healthy, hardy, not very productive. Bunch long, straggling, loose. Berry dark red in color; size medium; flavor mild, sprightly.

Season medium."

#### Bridgeford Red

Bunyard (1917) listed Bridgeford Red as a synonym for Gondouin.

The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society (Anonymous, 1924) contained the history and description.

"The variety was found by Messrs. Merryweather, growing in the village of Bridgeford, and was introduced by them some thirty years ago.

"A strong grower, making sturdy upright bushes with long stout shoots. The dark red flowers, coppery red tinge of the young leaves and shoots, and later the stiff leathery bluish-green up-folded leaves are conspicuous characters. A heavy cropper, the berries being large and brightly coloured in medium-size bunches. A little late in season."

#### Brown's White Seedling

Kenrick's Nurseries, Newton, Mass., referred to this variety as "new" in its catalog for 1831 (Thayer, 1923).

#### Buist's Long-Bunched

Downing, in Fruits and Fruit Trees of America (1872) gave this description (Thayer, 1923):

"Originated by Robert Buist of Philadelphia, Pa. A very vigorous upright grower and very productive.

"Fruit of large size. Bunches very long, tapering,

much like Red Dutch in flavor and color."

#### Carter's Red

Although no definite details exist in the literature on the origin of this variety, it is one of the older varieties, being cataloged by James Weed, Muscatine, Iowa, in 1859 (Thayer, 1923).

"Large; branches long, plants vigorous."

#### Caucassian

This red variety is listed in the catalog for 1843-44 by Joseph Breck & Son, Boston, Mass. (Thayer, 1923).

#### Caucasiche

Bunyard described this variety (1917):

"The bush is a strong grower, but the buds are frequently abortive.

"The short round winter buds are pointed well away from the stem. They are light brown and rather hairy.

"Young leaves are dark red, but at maturity they look the same as Versailles.

"Caucasiche has pale yellow flowers, sepals apart, wedge-shaped petals, rachis almost hairless. Flowering is late.

"Fruit bunch medium, rachis green, slightly hairy, berries medium.

"Mid-season variety."

### Gaywood's Seedling

This white-fruited variety was originated by A. J. Gaywood & Son, Marlboro, N. Y., probably during the early 1880's. It was sent to the N. Y. Experiment Station in 1888 (Thayer, 1923).

### Cerise Blanche

The only mention of Cerise Blanche known in the literature is derogatory and devoid of information. Thomas Rivers (1860) said that it "is a worthless variety, giving berries of the smallest size."

### Cerise de Tours

Cerise de Tours is probably synonymous with Cherry. William R. Prince & Co., Flushing, N. Y., treated them as synonyms in the catalogs for 1847 and 1860. William W. Valk, M. D., separated the two varieties in the Horticulturist in 1848, but he treated their origins as the same (Thayer, 1923).

### Champagne

This is probably one of the oldest varieties now grown. It was listed in nursery catalogs in 1823 (Thayer, 1923).

Some synonyms for Champagne are Pheasant's Eye and Grosseillier a Fruit Couleur de chair (Thayer, 1923). Barron (1876) shortened the latter synonym to Couleur de Chair.



The bush is small and robust. It bears short bunches of small pale-rose or flesh-colored berries. The leaves are broad and flat, like Red Dutch. It bears abundantly, and it is a desirable variety for preserves.

#### Champagner

This is a clear red variety, described in Exp. Farms (Can.) Rept. (Sharpe, 1897).

Bushes moderately vigorous. Fruit small, sweet, borne in medium-length clusters. Ripens about June 25.

#### Champion

This description is quoted from N. Y. Experiment Station Bulletin 95 (Beach, 1895).

"Bush very tall, vigorous, upright. Bunches medium length. Berries a shade lighter in color than White Dutch, not uniform in size, varying from small to large, and averaging medium or below. Flavor mild. Inferior to White Dutch in productiveness, appearance, flavor, and quality."

#### Chasselas

James Weed, Muscatine, Iowa, described Chasselas in his 1859 catalog as "a new white variety not yet tested." Patrick Barry, however, maintained that Chasselas was synonymous with White Grape (Thayer, 1923).

### Chautauqua

R. F. Lonnen, Maysville, Chautauqua Co., N. Y., found the original plant of this variety in the woods. Lewis Roesch, Fredonia, N. Y., introduced it in 1903. This variety has two synonyms: Lonnen, the name of the discoverer; and Chautauqua Climbing, from its very long canes, which make this variety suitable for espaliers or trellises (Thayer, 1923).

### Chenonceau

Bunyard (1917) described this variety as "a distinct form of Versailles with shorter bunches and later in starting than Versailles."

### Cherry

Contrary to many other varieties, the early life of the Cherry is reasonably well known. In 1840, M. Adrian Senecclause, Bourg-Argental, France, received a shipment of currant plants from Italy. The original plant of the Cherry variety was mixed with others under the name Ribes acerifolium. Senecclause named it Cherry because of its unusually large fruit size. It eventually became a progenitor of several large-fruited varieties. Synonyms are Cerise, Cerise de Tours, and Macrocarpa (Thayer, 1923).

Janczewski (1907) placed this variety in R. vulgare var. macrocarpum (Thayer, 1923). Hovey (1855) gave the

most complete and exact description of several in the literature (Thayer, 1923).

"The bushes are very vigorous, making strong, stout wood, with large thick and dark green foliage, Fruit very large, 0.5 to 0.7 inch in diameter, round; clusters, medium size usually containing from 11 to 13 berries; color bright red, semi-transparent, showing its large seed through the surface; juice, abundant, but rather acid; seeds, large."

Bunyard (1917) gave two explanations for the great similarity of Cherry and Versailles. Either the Cherry has developed larger bunches since it was introduced or the Cherry has passed out of existence, replaced by Versailles.

The frontispiece in The Horticulturist 4--new series (1854) shows four currant varieties. Cherry is one of them.

#### Cherry Long-Bunched

Cerise a longue Grappes is a synonym. This variety was listed by William R. Prince & Co., Flushing, N. Y., in 1860. (Thayer, 1923).

#### Chiswick Red

The origin of this variety is not known, but Bunyard (1917) thought that this variety was the Chiswick described by Thompson and Barron.

This description is taken from Bunyard (1917).

"Bushes vigorous and sturdy, upright.

"Buds are fairly large, held outward, and are slightly hairy.

"Chiswick Red has urceolate, yellow-green flowers. Sepals hardly meet and are turned back. Petals markedly wedge shaped, rachis downy.

"Young leaves are slightly yellow with a brown tinge. Adult leaves resemble Scotch, except that the silver edge is rather more pronounced.

"Fruit bunch is longer than Scotch. Berries are borne on stiff, wiry stems held to one side.

"Early season."

#### Climax

This white variety is described in Exp. Farms (Can.) Rept. (Mowoun, 1898).

The fruit of this variety ripens about July 6. The average yield per bush is given as 3 lb., 15 oz.

#### Clinton White

This variety was cataloged by John A. and Charles Kennicott, West Northfield, Cook Co., Ill., in 1856-57 (Thayer, 1923). A later reference may be found in the Minnesota Horticultural Society Report (Smith, 1876-77).

#### Cluster

"Fruit hangs in very large clusters otherwise similar to Red Dutch." Catalog of Kinsey & Grimes, Dayton, Ohio,

1869 (Thayer, 1923).

#### Comet

Comet was originated around 1881 by an amateur fruit grower on the Isle of Guernesy (Thayer, 1923).

Bush strong. Leaves light green when young; thick, leathery, and dark green when mature. Flowers pale, flat, with a distinct flashy ring in the center. Clusters large and compact. Fruit deep red, seedy, very large (Thayer, 1923; Anonymous, 1924).

Since not all descriptions agree on important characters, there is reason to believe that a mixture occurred soon after the origin of the variety.

#### Common Red

This probably refers to several varieties as a common name. Catalogs and other writings before 1840 refer to the Common Red. Some foreign nurseries still list it (Thayer, 1923).

#### Common White

A. F. Barron (1876) gave *Blanche Commune* as a synonym. His description from the same source is fairly useful.

"Plant of dwarf bushy habit. Leaves small, deeply cut and crumpled in their appearance. Bunches small; berries small."

### Connecticut Sweet Currant

Elizar E. Clark, New Haven, Conn., described it as "of good size, early, melting, and sweeter than any other variety." It was mentioned in the May 7, 1863, issue of The Country Gentlemen (Thayer, 1923).

### Crawford

M. Crawford, Cayuhoga Falls, Ohio, raised this variety from a seed of Comet. It is fairly recent in origin, being introduced by Mr. Crawford in 1913. It resembles Fay and Cherry (Thayer, 1923).

### Cumberland Red

Bush vigorous, moderately spreading. Fruit medium to large, bright scarlet, acid, medium quality. Season medium (ca. July 6). Productive in tests at Ottawa.

C. L. Stevens, Orillo, Ontario, Canada, originated this variety. Descriptions (above) may be found in Dominion Exp. Farms (Can.) Rept. (Macoun, 1899) and in Dominion Exp. Farms Bull. 94, Bush Fruits (Macoun & Davis, 1920).

### Cut-leaved

The origin of this variety is unknown, but Thayer (1923) found it cataloged by B. M. Watson & Sons, Plymouth, Mass., in 1855.

A. F. Barron (1876) gave the following description.



"Plant of somewhat slender spreading growth. Bunches of medium size. Berries small, of a pale red. A very poor cropper, Leaves small, deeply cut or laciniated and pointed, rendering it very distinct in appearance."

Synonyms include Feuille laciniae and Eyatts Novo.

#### Dana White

The originator, Dana of Massachusetts, raised this variety a few years before 1861. The Massachusetts Horticultural Society Report (1861) mentioned the variety, but no description is included. This lack of description is unfortunate, because by 1867, when Andrew S. Fuller undertook the description of American varieties, five distinct varieties were sold under the synonym Dana's White Yet, from 1870 to 1890, Society prizes for the best white currant were often awarded to Dana White. After 1880, the prizes went to either Dana White or French Transparent (Hedrick, 1925). Considering the confusion in this variety, it would not be surprising to find the two "varieties" to be one and the same.

Synonyms are Dana's White, Dana's Transparent, and Dana's New White Transparent.

#### David

The Proceedings of the APS (Glose, 1925) contained this description.

"Bunch very large; berry large, glossy red. Plant

a strong grower, productive."

Keystone State Nursery Company, Pittsburgh, Pa., is listed as the source of supply (Glose, 1925).

#### Defiance

This red currant was first mentioned in the Exp. Farms (Can.) Rept. (Macoun, 1899).

A very satisfactory description of this variety was given in the Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society (Anonymous, 1924).

"A strong grower, making large much-branched bushes with long stout shoots that are early in breaking into leaf in spring. The young leaves are noticeably light coloured; when mature rather pale green, thin and hairy beneath. The flowers are pale with a faint fleshy ring in the centre, A fairly heavy cropper, the berries being medium size, borne in moderately long bunches. Midseason."

#### De la Rochepoze

The exact origin of this variety in France is unknown, but Edward J. Evans & Co., York, Pa., listed it as "A new white currant from France" in 1887 (Thayer, 1923). The purity of this variety is suspect, however, since the fruit color is given as red in the Exp. Farms (Can.) Rept. (Sharpe, 1897).

### Diploma

Jacob Moore, Attica (or Brighton), N. Y., fertilized Cherry blossoms with White Grape pollen to produce a crop of seedlings in 1885. One of these, Moore No. 180, won a diploma and its name at the Pan American Exposition in 1901. Charles A. Green paid Moore \$3000 for the rights to Diploma and Red Cross (Thayer, 1923).

Thayer (1923) gave a short description of this variety: "Bunches rather short. Berries very large, clear translucent dark red, very attractive, meaty, sweet, excellent."

### Dr. Brete

Card, in Bush Fruits (1898) gave its origin as French. William S. Carpenter imported and cultivated it (Thayer, 1923).

Dr. Brete is described as a prolific bearer, with a long stem and short bunch (Thayer, 1923). A full-page engraving in the Horticulturist (1870) shows this to be a red variety, with the large fruit borne on stout branches. The leaves have three prominent lobes with two smaller lobes near the base.

### Doelittle

This variety was mentioned in North Dakota Experiment Station Bull. 2 (Waldron, 1891) as being larger than Red Dutch. Whether the bush or the fruit (or both) is larger is not made clear.

## Dutch

See Red Dutch.

## E &amp; B's Seedling

Unfortunately, E & B, the probable originators, were not certainly identified in the sketchy description of the plant. E & B is probably the abbreviation for Ellwanger and Barry, a nursery company selling several currant varieties in 1859, when James Weed, Muscatine, Iowa, described it (Thayer, 1923):

"From Cherry; large, red."

## Earliest of Fourlands

Gardener's Chronicle (F., 1931) gave a description of this variety. A condensation is given here.

Continental origin. Prince Albert type. Large, compact erect bushes. Branches are stiff and do not break at the ground. Fruits ripen early, Bunches large and long. Berries large, bright colored red, sweet.

## Early Red Provence

This variety was cataloged by William R. Prince & Co., 1858 (Thayer, 1923).

## Early Scarlet

Exp. Farms (Can.) Rept. (Macoun, 1899) contained a

description.

Fruit medium size. Ripens about July 4. Average yield per bush was 4 lb., 15 oz. in this test.

#### Eclipse

H. S. Anderson, Union Springs, N. Y., probably originated this variety in the 1880's. In 1892, he sent the variety to the Geneva (N. Y.) Experiment Station for plot trials and eventual introduction (Thayer, 1923).

#### Empire

This red variety was described in the "Ruralisms" column of The Rural New-Yorker (Anonymous, 1898).

"In size it is claimed that the fruit is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in circumference, and borne in clusters four inches long, while bushes two years from the cuttings yield from six to 10 qt. each. These claims may be true. We may not say that they are not, but they seem to us incredible."

Beach, a pomologist working at about the same time, maintained that the variety was first known as Johnson's Red (Thayer, 1923). Here again is a case of name proliferation in the literature. Card, in *Bush Fruits* (1917) mentioned that Empire was lacking in hardiness and productiveness. Either the originator was overly enthusiastic in his description or Card was describing a different variety.

### English Red

Daniel Smith, Burlington, N. J., cataloged this variety in 1823 (Thayer, 1923).

### English White

This variety appeared in the same catalog as English Red (Thayer, 1923).

### Esperen's White

This description appeared in Exp. Farms (Can.) Rept. (Sharpe, 1898).

Bush vigorous. Fruit large, sweet, borne in clusters of medium length. Ripens around June 27.

### Everbearing

Fred S. White gave an account of his discovery of this variety and a brief description in the Transactions of the Iowa State Horticultural Society (White, 1897).

"I am growing several valuable varieties, but I wish to make particular mention of my best variety, which came to me by chance--two bushes growing among a lot bought for Fay's Prolific. This variety I have named--or rather it was named for me at the Columbian exposition where I exhibited samples--as Everbearing. The bushes are strong growers, yield immense crops, which begin to ripen a few days later than Red Dutch, and the fruit continues to ripen on until



in September."

#### Eyatts Novo

This red variety is described in Exp. Farms (Can.) Rept. (Sharpe, 1897).

Bush vigorous. Ripens around June 28. Fruit medium size, acid, good flavor. Cluster medium length. Fairly productive.

#### Fay

Lincoln Fay of Portland, Chautauqua County, N. Y., experimented for 15 years before he produced this variety in 1858. George S. Josselyn, Fredonia, N. Y., introduced the Fay in 1880. Fay died soon after it was introduced, but Josselyn paid around \$10,000 in royalties to his widow and heirs (Thayer, 1923).

Bushes medium large with long stout upright branches. Leaves are flat and rugose, pale when young, and dull milky green when mature. Buds long and pointed, dark brown, on long supports. Vascular bundle scars are very prominent.

Flowers green, faintly striped with red. Sepals slightly separated. Petals have a wedge shape. Red "eye" in center of flower. Rachis downy, with a few dark glands. Flowers may open before the leaves appear (Bunyard, 1917).

Fruit bunches are long--six inches, according to a note in the Gardener's Chronicle (E., 1915), and the fruit is

large, deep red, and hanging loosely around the bunch. The season seems to vary from early (Anonymous, 1924) to midseason (Anonymous, 1928).

Synonyms are Fay Prolific, Fay's Prolific, and Walkers.

#### Fertile d'Angers

B. M. Watson, Plymouth, Mass., cataloged this variety in 1855 (Thayer, 1923).

Two descriptions can be given. W. R. Prince described it as "red, large, next to Cherry in size, excellent flavor, very productive, estimable." Thomas Rivers, however, described it as "intolerably sour" (Thayer, 1923). Since Prince and Rivers were perpetually at odds, this latter description probably represented an automatic contrary reaction against Prince's description.

#### Fertile de Palnau

Dr. Brettenneau, Tours, France, produced this variety from the seed "of the common currant." Andre Leroy, Angers, France, propagated and introduced it (Thayer, 1923).

Baptiste Desportes described it in 1852 as characterized by its early flowering and in particular the abundance of its clusters. The disposition of its branches is also different. They are generally less spreading and much longer than the ordinary currant. The leaves are slightly whitish, with deep lobes obtusely indented. The petioles are hairy at the base. The fruit is red, and, as in all

currants, slightly acid, but less so than the common species; its perfume and flavor render it very agreeable as a desert fruit." (Thayer, 1923).

Synonyms include Fertile de Pallaus, Fertile de Pallau, Fertile de Palvaire, Fertile precoce de Palnau, and Fertile precoce. The originator's name for it was Grosseillier fertile de Palnau (Thayer, 1923).

### Fertility

Bunyard gives the complete description of this variety in Gardener's Chronicle (Bunyard, 1917). I have rearranged the paragraphs to conform to this paper.

"Bush is moderate and upright in growth.

"Buds are small and round, a little away, dark chestnut brown, scales edged with hairs.

"A prominent brownish color dominates in the young leaves. Appear very early. Adult leaves are pale green.

"Flowers are a vulgar type. Sepals are well apart, and much turned back. Petals are slightly wedged. The eye is slightly red.

"A single flower bunch may have 25 flowers. The rachis is slightly hairy, with the berries held to one side.

"Late season."

### Filler

This variety bears the name of a German gardener who discovered the original plant growing among Red Dutch plants

in a garden in Milton, Ulster County, N. Y. Nursery stocks of this variety are badly mixed (Thayer, 1923).

Thayer (1923) gave a description of Filler.

This is a tall upright plant bearing large fruit which ripens early and hangs late. Similar to Fay in appearance.

#### Flesh Colored

This variety was cataloged by Joseph Breck & Son, Boston, Mass., in 1843 (Thayer, 1923).

#### Foster's Transparent White

J. W. Manning listed this variety as "New; best white currant." in his catalog (undated) (Thayer, 1923). The date of origin is unknown, but it was 1861 or later.

#### Fox's New Red

The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society (Anonymous, 1924) reported that this variety was obtained by the Laxton nursery from America, but additional details on its origin were lacking.

This description is adapted from the report cited above. Bushes small, sparsely branched. Shoots short and stout, Fruit slightly acid, ripens about June 28. Cluster long, fairly well filled.

#### Franco-German

Thayer (1923) finds no difference between this variety

and Longbunch Holland. As its names indicate, the origin is not known. Louis (Lewis?) Roesch, Fredonia, N. Y., the introducer, maintained that it was derived from the same seed lot as Fay's Prolific. That supposition is doubtful, however, since Franco-German has marked R. Petraeum characteristics. Also, the name Franco-German, or its synonym, Longbunch Holland, would not be placed on a variety of American origin. Considering these facts, it is most likely that Franco-German is of north-central European origin.

Roesch gave a description of this currant: "It is the healthiest, rankest grower, and most productive currant of which we know. It holds its foliage longest of any. The clusters are four to five inches long: its berries the size of La Versaillaise: ripens latest of all and holds its fruit in good condition until fall."

#### Frauendorfer

This white variety is described in Exp. Farms (Can.) Rept. (Sharpe, 1898). Bush vigorous, moderately productive. Fruits large, a little acid. Cluster long, well-filled.

#### French Large White

W. R. Prince, writing in the Horticulturist (1847), included this variety among "the largest varieties I have fruited."



### Giant Red

E. P. Powell originated this variety. In 1912, Matthew Crawford listed it in his nursery catalog (Thayer, 1923).

Powell gave this description of his variety: "It is about the size of the Fay, but bears annually an average of two quarts to a bush more than this celebrated variety. In quantity and quality of fruit it is equalled only by the White Grape. I am at present planting only White Grape and Red Giant for market purposes. Both of these varieties, if well trimmed, will stand from six to seven feet high when fully grown and will yield from seven to eight quarts to the bush. Fay yields, under the same treatment, about four quarts." (Thayer, 1923).

### Gloire des Sablons

Ferdinand Gloede, Les Sablons, Moret-sur-Loing, France, originated this variety in 1854. Ellwanger & Barry cataloged it for the first time in the United States in 1857 (Thayer, 1923).

Early descriptions were limited to the fruits, and this produced a rather lively exchange between Thomas Rivers and the originator, Gloede. Rivers wrote in the Gardener's Chronicle (1860) that the Gloire des Sablons was identical with or a seedling of Striped-fruited Currant, an inferior variety. Gloede's answer is a classic of outraged dignity



(Gloede, 1860).

"In Number 38 of your Paper (p. 852) Mr. Rivers published a very interesting article on Currants, in which, however, I notice a mistake which I beg to correct. Mr. R., in speaking of my seedling Currant, states that it is either the same as No. 12 (Striped-fruited) or a seedling from it, but equally worthless! It is neither the one nor the other, being raised by myself from the seeds from the old champaign or flesh-colored Currant. The seedling tree is still in my garden, and fruits not only abundantly, but is well worth the description I at first published of it. If, therefore Mr. Rivers finds it worthless or identical with another sort, he cannot possess the true one: at any rate, he has never been supplied by me direct."

Thayer (1923) described the Gloire des Sablons as it grew in the Station plots at Ohio: "Bush of good size, vigorous; shoots rather stout, short-jointed. Foliage very dense, stiff. Leaves small, except on vigorous new shoots, held horizontal or ascending, frequently with the midrib of the leaf continuing the direction of the petiole; edges upturned making the leaves saucer-shaped; base truncate; edges sharply and finely serrate with the tips of the serrations light in color giving the suggestion of a white edge to the leaf; upper surface dark bluish-green, rugose, glaucous; lower surface lighter in color, slightly pubescent; petiole with some dark crystalline glands at base and insertion.

"Blossom cluster and stem of good length, peduncle and pedicels with fine pubescence, pedicels long and bunch loose. Blossoms rather late, frequently all on the upper side of the almost horizontal raceme. Blossoms small, urn-shaped to campanulate; sepals not reflexed, overlapping, uncolored; petals small, wedge-shaped; ring absent.

"Fruit rather scanty, cluster and stem of good length. Berries 10 to 15, held more or less to one side of the pendant stem. Berries small, acid, bright red, pale red, or often striped.

"Characteristics.--Bush much like Victoria, but fruit more acid and often pink or striped.

"Value.--Easily surpassed by many other varieties."

#### Goegginger's Pyriform

Heinrich Goegginger raised this variety near Riga, in Latvia. Dr. Regel described it in 1873 (Bunyard, 1917).

This variety is a partial petraeum derivative. Bushes composed of stout shoots. Buds long. Leaves stout, coriaceous. Flowers red and campanulate. Fruit characteristically pear-shaped (Bunyard, 1917).

Janczewski classified the pyriform currants as rubrum x petraeum hybrids. J. L. Budd described some pyriform varieties found in West or Central Russia: "The leaves are thick, firm, peculiarly net-veined, and deeply lobed." (Thayer, 1923).

Illustrations of pyriform varieties may be found in

various places. Volume 27 of *Gartenflora* (1878) has a colored illustration of Goegginger's red pear-shaped currants. Maurer of Jena described four--a red one and a white one from Goegginger and two Swiss currants--in Pomologische Monatschafte for 1904 (Thayer, 1923).

#### Gondouin

Confusion reigns in the nomenclature of this variety.

A. F. Barron, writing in the Gardener's Chronicle (1876) listed synonyms as Raby Castle, May's Victoria, and Imperiale Rouge d'Hollande a grappes longues. Bunyard (1917) contributed Bridgeford Red as a synonym. Long Bunch Holland is listed also. This last is probably identical with the Imperiale Rouge, etc., of Barron (1876).

M. Gondouin raised this variety at St. Cloud, France, just west of Paris. No date of origin was given (Bunyard, 1917).

Bushes stout and vigorous, shoots upright, buds large, long, flat. Flowers campanulate, dark claret-red, sepals overlapping, not ciliated; petals broadly wedge-shaped. Rachis very hairy. Young leaves red. Adult leaves blackish-green, very thick, bullate, stiffly held upward. Fruit bunch medium size. Berries large and even, very bright clear red, a little flattened. Rachis downy. This is a late-season variety (Bunyard, 1917).

Janczewski assigned this variety to a separate species, R. gondouini (Bunyard, 1917).

#### Gondouin Red

There is some confusion in the literature concerning the relationship of this variety and Gondouin. Descriptions are sketchy, and they indicate that these names may apply to the same variety. Their places of origin differ, however. Gondouin Red was probably originated in Belgium by M. Gondouin. Again, no data of origin is known, making the problem almost insoluble. To add to the difficulties, Red Provence is also given as a synonym for Gondouin Red. If this is indeed the case, then W. R. Prince introduced Gondouin Red to the United States when he fruited it in 1847. Dr. William Valk, however, listed the variety as not yet introduced in 1848. J. S. Cabot said it had been fruited "in the past season." (Thayer, 1923)

The descriptions of this variety are few and incomplete, owing to confusion of varieties. From the available descriptions, however, it is certain that this variety belongs in the *R. petraeum* hybrid complex. (cf. Thayer, 1923).

Plant a strong grower. Leaves large. Fruit medium size to large, very sour. Young shoots blood red (Thayer, 1923).

#### Gondouin White

Joseph Breck & Sons, Boston, Mass., listed Gondouin

White in their 1843 or 1844 catalog (Theyer, 1923).

This variety is so badly mixed it cannot be identified by a description.

#### Houghton Castle

Origin of this variety is uncertain, but it probably came from Houghton Castle, near Higham, England (Bunyard, 1917). It was introduced about 1820.

Bushes strong and spreading. Buds, medium size, pointed away, a little hairy. Young leaves silver-white. Adult leaves yellow-green, densely woolly beneath, similar to Raby Castle at this stage. Flowers urceolate, with slight ring, petals less wedged than Raby Castle, sepals slightly red. Rachis remarkably downy. Fruit bunches long, rachis green, stiff, hairy. Berries medium, soon turning a dark dull red. A prolific midseason bearer, It is a hybrid between rubrum and vulgare (Bunyard, 1917).

Synonyms include Wolly-Leaved, Mallow-Leaved, American Wonder, New Red Dutch, Red Grape, R. Rubrum Houghtonianum Jancz., May's Victoria, and Defiance (Bunyard, 1917).

#### Houghton Seedling

No origin is given, but A. F. Barron gave a fairly complete description in the Gardener's Chronicle (1876).

"This is a late variety, the berries of medium size, deep red, and rather acid. Bunches long, produced in very thick clusters. A most abundant cropper. The plant is



of a very robust, close-growing, sturdy, stubby habit, very rarely producing long shoots. The leaves are small, deep dark green, somewhat deeply cut, and crumpled in appearance. Very distinct. This variety, from its close compact habit of growth and sturdy constitution, is very suitable for growing in exposed situations. and for training as an espalier or pyramid."

### Imperial

B. K. Bliss cataloged this variety in 1860. Imperial Juane and Imperial Yellow were soon applied as synonyms, indicating the yellow-white color of the fruit (Thayer, 1923). About 1890, the Rural New-Yorker contained a short description of Imperial (Thayer, 1923).

"Bushes upright, vigorous. Berries are large, or nearly so, as those of the White Grape. Color yellowish white and of the best quality."

### Knight's Early Red

This is one of the varieties of currant developed by Thomas Andrew Knight, the famous nineteenth-century plant breeder. William R. Prince & Co., Flushing, N. Y., introduced it in the U. S. in 1844. Opinions varied as to its earliness. S. P. Fowler (1850) said it was not enough earlier than other varieties to be of great importance. Thomas Rivers, however, found it to be eight to 10 days earlier than Red Dutch, or the same season as La Hative



(Thayer, 1923).

### Knight's Large Red

Hovey mentions the large size of the berries of this variety in the Magazine of Horticulture (1842). A. F. Barron's description (1876) is more complete, although it is not as enthusiastic about the size of the fruit.

"It is a most abundant bearer. The bunches are long and produced in immense clusters. Berries of medium size, of a bright red color. The plant is of strong and vigorous growth, the shoots growing mostly erect. Leaves pale green, rather small, somewhat deeply cut and crumpled in appearance."

### Knight's Sweet Red

The Cultivator mentioned this variety as not yet introduced in 1835 (Anonymous, 1835). The Gardener's Chronicle (Anonymous, 1841) mentioned its high quality. It was never widely grown commercially, though.

### Lace-leaved

Barron's description occurs in the Gardener's Chronicle (1876): "A fine compact-growing bushy variety. Bunches of a medium size. Berries medium, of a pale-red colour. A most abundant bearer. Shoots dark, spreading. Leaves dark green with a glaucous hue, and the greater portion, more especially those in the shade, having a narrow silver lacing or border, giving the plants a slightly variegated

appearance."

#### La Constante

Origin unknown.

Bushes vigorous, very upright. Young leaves green. Adult leaves very dark green, upfolded, held stiffly. Flowers slightly urceolate with slight ring. Sepals tinged with brown. Petals broad wedge-shaped. Bunch held stiffly outward. Rachis covered with dense curling hairs. Flowers open late. Fruit bunch moderately long, with stems  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches long before fruits develop. Berries bright red, held to one side. Rachis turns yellow when fruits ripen (Bunyard, 1917).

#### Lady Victoria

The Proceedings of the APS (Anonymous, 1923) gave this short and almost useless description.

"Large, long bunches, red fruit."

#### La Fertile

M. Bertin, Versailles, France, produced this variety from seed of Cherry (Thayer, 1923). Thomas Rivers wrote in The Horticulturist (1855) that "It is a most prodigious bearer, so that the leaves are hidden by its fruits." In the Gardener's Chronicle (Rivers, 1860), however, the fruits are said to be too acid.

### La Hative

This variety was also produced by M. Bertin, Versailles, in a similar manner. Again, he selected a seedling of the Cherry variety (Thayer, 1923). No date of origin is given.

Knight's Early Red and La Hative bear fruit about the same time, but the berries of the latter are reported to be the larger. The fruit is deep red and mild, borne on a long cluster (Thayer, 1923).

Hative de Bertin is the only synonym known for this variety (Thayer, 1923).

### La Turinoise

No information is available on this variety's origin.

Bush spreading. Buds pointed, a little away, slightly hairy. Young leaves yellowish brown. Adult leaves dark green, rugose, and coriaceous. Flowers of vulgare type. Sepals separate and reversed. Petals wedge-shaped, slightly downy, few glandular hairs. Fruit bunches long. Berries large and even in size. Early season (Bunyard, 1917).

### La Versaillaise

M. Bertin, Versailles, France, raised this variety from seed of Cherry. B. M. Watson, Plymouth, Mass., listed it for the first time in America in 1855 (Thayer, 1923).

A good description of La Versaillaise is given by G. M. Hovey in the Magazine of Horticulture (1858).

"Fruit very large, from 6/10 to 8/10 inch in diameter, round. Clusters large, usually containing 16-18 berries; color bright red, slightly transparent, but not sufficient to show the seeds as in the Cherry. Juice abundant, less acid than Cherry, seeds large."

Cherry, Pay, and La Versailles have been badly mixed in the nurseries. There are several characteristics useful for identification of these varieties. Cherry is a stocky, short-jointed plant having dark green leaves. La Versailles is a loosely growing plant with larger shoots. It has more leaves and less tendency to be budless on the upper 2 or 3 nodes. Fruit bunches of Cherry are usually short, containing large transparent, poorly-flavored, acid berries. La Versailles is late in ripening, but it has a longer bunch of berries which are darker red, less transparent, and less acid than Cherry. The bunch of La Versailles also has a longer stem between the branch and the lowermost berry, making it easier to harvest. The most noticeable difference between La Versailles and Pay is the more upright growth habit of La Versailles (Thayer, 1923).

A. P. Barron, writing in the Gardener's Chronicle (1876) gave La Versailles as a synonym of Red Cherry. The description given for Red Cherry, however, makes it almost impossible to relate them. See the description for Red Cherry.

### Laxton's No. 1

The variety name gives a clue as to the introducer, but other details of its origin are lacking.

The Gardener's Chronicle (Anonymous, 1931) gives this description.

"Ripens a little later than Laxton's Perfection. Berries medium to large, bright color, excellent flavor. Strong, sturdy, rather spreading bush. Branches do not break easily."

### Littlecroft Beauty

Although not much of the history of this variety is included, this description given in the Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society (Anonymous, 1924) is of some value in identification.

"Making medium-size bushes with long stout brittle shoots that are often broken by wind or the weight of the crop. The flowers are pale in colour, and the leaves large, thick and dull milk-green in colour. The bushes have cropped very heavily, the berries being large and the bunches long. Midseason, This variety was received for trial in 1916... it should be recommended to grow in sheltered parts of the garden, or as cordons with adequate supports."

### London Market

Since London Market has two synonyms, London Red and



Short-bunched Red, the time of introduction to the U. S. is somewhat obscure. The first importation of nursery stock under the name London Market was made by Henry Bowles in 1879 (Thayer, 1923).

Bushes of this variety are thrifty upright growers. The leaves are light green with even lighter green margins. This gives the leaves the distinctive appearance of white margins. The leaves hang late. Fruit bunches are medium long with short stems, thickly set with berries. The large berries are light red, firm, transparent, and rather sharp acid. Seeds are large and numerous (Thayer, 1923).

#### Long-Bunched Holland

Other names for this variety are Hollande la Longue Grappe, Long Grape of Holland, Long Bunched Red, and Long Bunched Red Dutch (Grosse Rouge de Hollande), and Long Bunch (Thayer, 1923).

Samuel Edwards, Lamaille, Bureau County, Illinois, got this variety from Andre Leroy, Angers, France, in 1855. They arrived with the name "Hollande la Longue Grappe," which Edwards anglicized into Long Bunch Holland. His description is given below (Thayer, 1923).

"It is a red variety with long bunches, of good quality, one of the strongest growers, ripens its fruit and retains its foliage later than any other variety known to me, and is probably adapted to cultivation further south than other varieties."



All the detailed descriptions available indicate that this variety is descended either from R. petraeum or a petraeum hybrid. Bush strong growing, vigorous, upright. Leaves large, flat, dark green, deeply cut, with reddish veins. Flowers with a reddish tinge (Thayer, 1923).

#### Mallow-leaved

The Sweet Red is the only synonym, given by Barron in a Gardener's Chronicle article (1876).

"This is a strong-growing late variety. Bunches long. Berries small, of pale red colour. Late in ripening, and a somewhat poor cropper. The plant is of a very distinct appearance, strong, tall-growing, with pale shoots. Leaves large, flat, soft, downy like a Mallow, of a pale green colour, something like the Black Currant."

Perhaps it would be appropriate to comment further on black-currant characteristics in red currants and a few other oddities in the currants. In the Gardener's Chronicle (1939), Wm. Treseden, Ltd., Cardiff, Wales, reported that a "strig" (cluster) of black currants had developed at the end of a red currant branch. One would be inclined to dismiss this as one of Nature's (or Mr. Treseden's) little jokes, but the reciprocal condition (red currants on a wild black currant bush) was developed into the Wanka variety by N. E. Hanson, Brookings, S. D. ! See the description of Wanka, below. Red and white fruits on a single bush are

uncommon, but not rare, and the Gardener's Chronicle (MacKenzie, 1855) has an account of a bush that bore "red, white, and Champagne berries" for 14 years. This problem of fruit color inheritance has apparently never been studied, and it may present a rather interesting problem.

#### Moore's Favorite

The Proceedings of the APS (Anonymous, 1923) contains this aptimistic, but taxonomically useless, description.

The largest and most productive for this part of the country."

#### Moore's Ruby

Jacob Moore's Cherry x White Grape crosses yielded this variety, in addition to Diploma and Red Grape. It must have been produced several years before 1875, since G. M. Hooker in 1881 mentioned that it had fruited for five years.

This variety should not be confused with Ruby of the Mayflower, described later by John Lewis Childs. Childs' Ruby of the Mayflower is probably identical with the Filler variety, since the stories of their origins in The Rural New-Yorker (H., 1893) coincide exactly.

Bunyard's description in the Gardener's Chronicle (1917) is the most detailed in the literature, so the description given here is adapted from it.

Bush sturdy, upright. Dormant buds moderately large, dark brown, slightly hairy, standing away from wood. Leaves

darker green than Scotch (see below) and slightly glaucous. Flowers urceolate, green, striped with red. Buds faintly red. Sepals overlap. Petals wedge shaped. Rachis a little hairy, held outward. Fruit bunch a little longer than Scotch, ripens late. In winter, Scotch and Moore's Ruby are indistinguishable.

C. M. Hooker went into more detail on characteristics of the fruit of Moore's Ruby (Thayer, 1923). "The fruit is of large size, next to the Cherry and La Versaillaise in that respect.... The color of the fruit is a beautiful bright red, not quite so dark as is the Cherry; ripens at nearly the same time; the flavor a very agreeable mild acid, somewhat similar to the White Grape and fully equal to that of any variety with which I am acquainted."

Charles G. Hooker, of C. M. Hooker & Sons, pointed out some differences among Moore's Ruby, Cherry, and Fay. "The plants are not alike in color, size or manner of growth. The Ruby is smaller than the Fay or Cherry and also is much sweeter, resembling much the White Grape." (Thayer, 1923).

#### North Star

North Star is a "lost" variety. The first year this variety appeared was 1865, when the originator sent a branch of the seedling to Farm and Home magazine. Dr. P. A. Jewell of the Jewell Nursery Co., Lake City, Minnesota, bought the variety and introduced it a few years later. The early records of the company were lost in a fire, but Mr. Under-

wood, an employee, remembered that the North Star was bought from two brothers named Adams. This description appeared in an old Jewell catalog: "The North Star Currant. The points of excellence are its hardiness, vigorous growth of wood, early fruiting, and great productiveness. The average growth for 1889 (an extremely dry season) on light gravelly soil was from thirty to thirty-six inches. The size of the berry averages one-half inch in diameter, and the length of the fruit cluster frequently measures five and six inches and averages over four and one-half inches. It has a naked stem which attaches the cluster to the wood and allows the fruit to be readily picked. It is superior in quality, rich in flavor, and much less acid than the red sorts." (Thayer, 1923).

Nursery stocks of North Star must have been contaminated very early in the life of the variety. C. A. Green, in a letter to the Rural New-Yorker (1897), indicated that Red Dutch plants were mixed with North Star plants which were "lighter in color, longer in cluster, and much larger in berry." Various other statements bear out Green's complaint. At the time of Thayer's study it appeared that the North Star had passed out of cultivation or at least disappeared from the nurseries. It was replaced by Red Dutch (Thayer, 1923).

Although several other descriptions exist, they were all written later and show evidence of confusion arising from the mixture of the nursery stocks.

### Norwegian Red Dutch

The Proceedings of the APS (Close, 1934) lists this as a synonym of Viking.

### October or Dublin Currant

William Lawrence described this variety briefly in the Gardener's Chronicle (1929). It is a pink variety, resembling claret and water. The fruit hangs late: "...we gathered some 2 lb. from the bush on October 21."

### Old Red

This variety has one synonym, Rouge Commune (Thayer, 1923). These names (and the following description) strongly suggest that this is the Common Red known to the herbalists.

A. F. Barron gives the description in the Gardener's Chronicle (1876): "The plant is of most robust growth, but a poor cropper, and with small berries. It is most probably the original stock from which Knight's Large Red, the present common variety, has been selected."

### Old White

John Saul, writing in The Horticulturist (1854) described what appears to be the original white variant of a red currant brought into cultivation: "The variety is now but seldom to be met with, the larger varieties having taken its place. The bunches are short, berries small,



amber-colored or nearly so, and of higher flavor than any of the other Whites. This should be borne in mind by the raisers of new varieties."

#### Palmer's Large Red

John Saul described this variety in The Horticulturist (1854):

"In this we have a very fine long-bunched, large-berried currant; a vigorous grower and an abundant bearer. It is extensively cultivated in some localities in England."

#### Perfection

Two varieties bear this name, one American and the other English in origin, The English variety is now known as Laxton's Perfection.

Charles G. Hooker produced this variety in 1887 from a Fay Prolific x White Grape cross. In 1901 it won awards from the Western New York Horticultural Society and the Pan-American Exposition, and it received the Barry Medal. After being introduced in 1902 by C. M. Hooker & Sons, it won a gold medal at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition (Thayer, 1923).

Cuttings of this variety were sent to the New York Experiment Station in 1897. This description was given by Professor Beach, a pomologist at the Station (Thayer, 1923):



"Although they have not yet reached full size, or mature habit of growth, they are very productive. In form of bush and health and vigor of foliage, the Perfection is intermediate between its parents, Fay and White Grape. The fruit is borne along the old wood much like that of the White Grape. On the average the size of cluster and size of berry both exceed the Fay, and as far as I know equal that of any variety which has yet been disseminated. The fruit is usually uniformly large to the tip of the cluster. Its largest berries are fully equal to the largest of the Comet. White on the average its fruit is not quite so large as that of the Comet its clusters average longer. The pulp is less seedy and considerably better in quality. The stem of the cluster is free from berries near its attachment to the plant, thus making it easy to pick. The color is a good red, somewhat lighter than the Fay. It ripens about with Fay and Cherry."

Bunyard mentioned in the Gardener's Chronicle (1917) that Perfection was a form of Versailles.

#### Perfection (Laxton)

Bunyard (1917) gave a brief account of the origin of this variety: "Raised by Messrs. Laxton Brothers and introduced in 1910."

Bush stout, vigorous. Buds small, roundish, dark brown, away from the stem. Young leaves slightly tinged with brown. Mature leaves rugose, grayish brown. Flowers

green vulgare type. Sepals overlapping. Petals T-shaped. Rachis almost glabrous. Fruit bunches very long. Berries large, uniform, pendant. Rachis stout, green as fruits ripen. Midseason to late (Bunyard, 1917).

Bunyard mentioned that the American variety Perfection proved "greatly inferior" when compared with Laxton's Perfection, "the finest Currant of recent years...." (Bunyard, 1917) A confusion of another variety with the American variety may have occurred, leading Bunyard to this conclusion, but, in my opinion, this smacks of chauvinism.

#### Pitmaston Sweet Red

John Saul gave a description of this variety in The Horticulturist (1854). It is worthless as a guide to identification: "Bunches short, with berries below medium size. This is the sweetest of all the Red Currants. Raised by Mr. Williams, of Pitmaston."

#### Pomona

George W. Blue found the first Pomona plants in E. J. Howland's garden on the outskirts of Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1873. They were labelled as Knight's Sweet Red. Blue moved some of the plants to his place, Pomona Farms, from whence comes the name of this variety. Albertson & Hobbs introduced it in 1896 (Thayer, 1923).

Knight's Improved Red and Pomona resemble each other closely, and they may be identical.

Bush vigorous, hardy, and extremely productive. Berries not very acid. Seeds small and few. G. Harold Powell, writing about the New York Station trials in 1894, reported that Pomona clusters and berries closely resembled those of Versailles (Thayer, 1923).

#### Pomona

The Proceedings of the APS (Anonymous, 1923) lists this as a misspelling of Pomona.

#### Prince Albert

According to Bunyard (1917), this variety has a history of 200 years or more in Europe. The first note of its appearance in America is a description by Patrick Barry in The Horticulturist (1854): "The Prince Albert is a new variety sent us a few years ago from France. The bunches are very long; berries nearly as large as the Cherry, of a light pinkish-red color, and ripens quite late. Plant vigorous, with distinct, folded, and sharply serrated foliage. Bears profusely. Rivers says, in his latest catalogue, that Prince Albert is the same as the Transparent White. The probability is, that he received his plant from the same source that we did, but got it wrong. It is yet very scarce. It is so remarkable that it can not be confounded with any other sort." The Continental Europeans apparently did exactly that, however. Bunyard, in a letter to the Gardener's Chronicle (1915), stated that Prince Albert

was grown as Red Dutch across the Channel.

The ancestry of Prince Albert is doubtful. Otto and Dietrich (Berger, 1924) classified it with R. pallidum (R. petraeum x rubrum). Bunyard's description of this variety, from which the following description is taken, is given in the Gardener's Chronicle (1917).

Bushes stout, upright, vigorous. Young shoots red, Buds long, flat, dark brown, slightly hairy, appressed. Leaf scar light brown, prominent. Young leaves red-tinged. Mature leaves dark green, fairly thick, stiffly held upright. Flowers like R. petraeum, campanulate. Sepals overlapping, ciliated. Petals broad wedge shape. Rachis hairy. Fruit bunch medium size. Berries large, uniform, slightly flattened, shiny bright red. Fruit ripens late.

Probably the most unique statement in the history of currant-fruit evaluation was made by S. B. Willard, horticulturist and nurseryman, Geneva, N. Y.: "We have raised tons of them. It is the latest currant we have. People buy them, but I don't know what for. They are the most outrageous currant I ever raised, but they make clean money. There is nothing good about them; so sour you can't eat them and so full of seeds there is no juice." (Thayer, 1923)

A number of synonyms are associated with Prince Albert: Rivers Late Red, German Sour, Hollandische Rote, Ruhm Von Haarlem, and Verrieres Rouge (Bunyard, 1917).

### Prolific White Grape

The Proceedings of the APS (Anonymous, 1927) contains this description: "Finest white currant, mild-flavored berries, and bunches large, very productive."

### Raby Castle

For the sake of clarity as to the origin of this variety I shall give Bunyard's version (1917) of its origin: "Raised at Raby Castle. Mr. Shortt, gardener at Raby Castle, writes in 1860 that it is 'Frequently confused with Houghton Castle, a later production...: Original tree still at Raby Castle.'" For a more complete description of the nomenclatural quagmire in which this variety is involved, refer to the treatment of the Victoria (below).

Synonyms for Raby Castle include American Wonder, Red Versailles, Dutch, Victoria, and Houghton Castle (Bunyard, 1917).

Bushee moderately vigorous, upright. Buds small, hairy, thin, divergent, Young leaves pale yellowish-green tinged with brown. Mature leaves flat, yellowish-green, densely hairy beneath. Flowers unisexual, no ring. Petals wedge-shaped. Sepals washed with light red when young. Rachis with thin curling hairs. Flowers before leaves. Fruit bunch medium length. Rachis yellow, downy. Pedicels fairly short, held to one side. Berries bright red, not turning dark on the tree (Bunyard, 1917).



### Red Cherry

A. F. Barron listed La Versaillaise as a synonym for this variety. His description appears in the Gardener's Chronicle (1876):

"The berries of this variety are very large and handsome, almost like small Cherries; but they are produced very sparingly, the bunches frequently consisting of only one berry, and from twenty to thirty berries on a plant. The plant is of a gross spreading habit of growth. The shoots pale, very gross. Leaves very large, broad, deep green. It is unsuited to cultivation in the open ground, as the shoots, from their gross nature, break off so easily, that no plant is formed. The buds do not break freely after pruning. Grown against a wall it is more satisfactory."

It is refreshing to be able to say that the synonym is a clear case of mistaken identity. These descriptions vary so widely that it would be difficult to confuse La Versaillaise with this variety.

### Red Cross

This is a relatively young variety. Jacob Moore, Attica, N. Y., obtained it as the result of a Cherry x White Grape cross in 1884. It bore fruit in 1889, and in 1899 the APS placed Red Cross on the list of recommended varieties (Hedrick, 1925).

Bunyard (1917) noted that it "closely resembles Ver-



sailles." The flower of Red Cross, however, has a green "eye" or center. The leaves, also, are held more flatly, and it starts growth later in the season (Bunyard, 1917). Small bunches and fruit cracking limit its usefulness (Hedrick, 1925).

### Red Dutch

This variety shares with White Dutch the distinction of being the oldest improved currant variety, succeeding the Common Red, an unimproved native species. As its name indicates, it was probably produced and grown in the Low Countries. From there it appeared in France, Germany, and England. The "currant plants" sent to America by the Massachusetts Company in 1629 or 1630 were probably Red Dutch (Hedrick, 1925). It was first cataloged in America in 1823 (Thayer, 1923).

Description of this variety is impossible. A list of synonyms should prove the validity of this statement:

Belle de St. Gilles	Hative de Bertin
Bertin No. 9	La Hative
Chenonceaux	Prince Albert
Fertile d'Angleterre	Queen Victoria
Fertile de Bertin	Red Grape
Fertile de Palnau	Rivers Late Red
Grosse Rouge de Boulogne	Verrieres Rouge

The United States, England, and continental Europe include several different species as the parent species of Red Dutch variety (Bunyard, 1915). Thus, Red Dutch, as a variety, is gone.

### Red Dutch, Long Bunched

This variety is probably identical with Long Bunched Holland. John Saul, Washington, D. D., wrote a description in The Horticulturist (1854) for this variety, which agrees substantially with that of Long Bunched Holland:

"This is a fine long-bunched, large-berried variety of the above (Red Dutch). It is later and rather more acid."

### Red English

This variety is described in a report of the Dominion Horticulturist (1926), Ottawa, Canada (Close, 1927).

### Red Grape

John Saul gave this taxonomically inadequate description in The Horticulturist (1854).

"A very fine long-bunched variety with large berries, but very acid."

Hedrick (1925) gave the following description of Red Grape: "Similar to Red Dutch, but more acid; plants not quite so upright. Fruit large; branches very long; clear red; productive. Listed by the American Pomological Society in its recommended list of fruits in 1862;...."

### Red Lake (Minnesota No. 24)

The Minnesota Horticulturist (Jan., 1933) originally published a description of Red Lake. The Proceedings of the

APS (Closs, 1933) cited this source in the description:

"Plant of medium size, vigorous, upright; foliage light green, leaves medium to large; fruit clusters very long, medium compact, generally well-filled; stem very long and rather thick; berry very large, round, clear light red, very attractive, skin medium thick, slightly tough, semi-transparent; flesh juicy, melting, mildly acid, sprightly, very good; season late."

The first description of Red Lake in England was in the Gardener's Chronicle (Cook, 1950).

#### Red Striped-leaved

John Saul (1854) described this variety as "a poorly variegated variety of a bad Red Currant. Unworthy of culture, either for its foliage or fruit."

#### Rivers Late Red

"Quite distinct and 14 days later than other varieties." This short description is taken from the Proceedings of the APS (Anonymous, 1923).

#### Rouge de Boulogne

This variety has one synonym, Grosse Rothe von Boulogne. It closely resembles Versailles (see description below), but it is a poorer cropper. The origin is unknown (Bunyard, 1917).

## Ruby

See Moore's Ruby.

## Scotch

Millearn Red, London Market, and Fowler's London Red have been used as synonyms. The origin of this variety is unknown (Bunyard, 1917).

Bush sturdy, upright. Leaf buds medium large, dark brown, hairy, divergent. Young leaves green, late in opening. Mature leaves pale green, small, strongly upfolded, hang late. Flowers urceolate, green striped with red. Flower buds faintly red. Sepals overlapping. Petals wedge shaped. Rachis hairy, held outwards. Fruit bunch medium length, compact. Berries held to one side (Bunyard, 1917).

## Seedless Red

Information on the origin of Seedless Red is rather scanty. Herr Petzold of Hessen, in west central Germany, found this variety and propagated it. The date of origin, however, is unknown (Bunyard, 1917).

This variety has one synonym, Kerulose. It is a dwarf form of Gondouin. Soft ovules take the place of seeds in mature fruits (Bunyard, 1917).

## Skinner's Early

Bunyard (1917) gave this description:

"This resembles the Dutch very closely but is earlier; the bunches do not have the long stem of Dutch, the rachis turns yellow and the fruits decrease in size, more to the end of the bunch. A distinct and vigorous variety much grown in Kent for early market use. Origin unknown, but probably raised in Kent."

Bunyard mentioned that this is a "distinct...variety," and that it was grown mostly in Kent. As a general rule, if a variety is grown successfully over only a small area, it retains its identity better than do the more cosmopolitan varieties.

#### Southwell Red

The Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society (1924) listed the introducers as "Messrs. Merryweather." The following description is adapted from the same source.

Bushes compact. Medium long stout shoots, late in leafing. Upfolded leaves dark bluish-green. Flowers late, blotched with crimson. Fruit late. Berries medium size, dark red. Fairly good cropper.

#### Strip-fruited

The origin is unavailable in the literature. Barron described this variety in the Gardener's Chronicle (1876):

"This, in appearance, resembles the common Red. Berries small, pale in colour, with one or two darker stripes, rather pretty. A very poor cropper. The Gloire des Sablons is



stated to be a White variety, prettily striped with red. At Chiswick it proved the same as Gondouin."

The dispute as to whether this variety is identical with Gloire des Sablons or different from it cannot be resolved without more evidence. Apparently, earlier classifiers relied more on polemics than on objective study.

### Transparent

Synonyms are French Transparent, White Transparent, and Transparent White (Thayer, 1923).

The earliest mention of Transparent in the United States was in the William R. Prince & Co. catalog. It listed "French Large White" and "White Transparent--Blanc Transparent." B. M. Watson, Plymouth, Mass., in 1855, listed "Large White transparent." Ellwanger & Barry's Catalog (1857) contains a description of it: "Transparent White--a very handsome new French variety, larger than the White Dutch; amber colored, Excellent." An additional bit of information is put down in the W. R. Prince & Co. catalog for 1860 with mention of its late-hanging characteristics (Thayer, 1923). Thomas Rivers (1860) wrote: "It seems to be a seedling raised from (White Dutch); when highly cultivated it gives bunches and berries of a very large size, but under ordinary culture it cannot be distinguished from White Dutch."

From 1880 to 1890 the Massachusetts Horticultural Society award usually went to Transparent over Dana's Transparent (Thayer, 1923).



### Utrecht

Bunyard (1917) described this variety. The description below is adapted from it.

Origin unknown.

Bush strong, more spreading than Dutch, internodes short. Buds small, slightly hairy, dull brown, close to the wood. Young leaves brown tinted. Mature leaves pale green, slightly upfolded. Flowers pale-yellow, vulgare type. Sepals well apart, hardly folding back. Petals wedge-shaped. Rachis slightly downy, few dark glandular hairs. Fruit bunch medium, loose. Rachis very stout, slightly downy.

### Variegated

Barron (1876) listed Feuille panachee as a synonym.

"This is a variegated-leaved form of the common Red. A poor cropper. The leaves are prettily variegated in their appearance in the spring, but soon become dull and dingy."

### Verrieres Rouge

Barron (1876) classified this as a dwarf variety of Gondouin. This is why the names are often used synonymously.

### Versailles

M. Bertin, Versailles, France, originated this variety about 1835, probably from a seed of the Cherry variety.

It appeared in America about 1850, and its fame spread so quickly that it was listed as a recommended variety by the APS in 1862 (Hedrick, 1925).

Bush vigorous, upright. Leaf buds dark chestnut-brown, slightly hairy, divergent. Young leaves tinted brown. Mature leaves milky green, stout; held almost flat. Leaf stalk not channeled. Flowers vulgare type, eye tinted red. Petals wedge-shaped or linear. Sepals turned back. Rachis slightly hairy, green when fruits ripen. Berries large, dark red. Pedicels long, slender, and lax, allowing fruits to hang loosely in the bunch. Midseason. Bunyard mentioned that "A good and accurately colored figure will be found in Decaisne's Jardin Fruitiers." (Bunyard, 1917)

Synonyms are Belle de Versailles (the first name applied to this variety), Belle Versailles, La Versaillaise, Eclipse, and Magnum Bonum (Bunyard, 1917).

### Victoria

Occasionally, confusion and controversy over nomenclature involve an innocent bystander variety. This is the situation with Victoria. To show its involvement and also to clarify (hopefully) the origins of Raby Castle and Houghton Castle, I will give the story with all available details.

One version of the story is given in an account signed "G. W." (1847):

"The Houghton Castle, alias May's Victoria, alias the Raby Castle currant. The following is the history of this excellent currant, which I took down a few days ago from its discoverer, Mr. Robert Charlton, nurseryman, Wall, near Hexham, Northumberland. About 40 years ago, Mr. Charlton, the apprentice to a Mr. John Gray, a jobbing gardener, who took care of Captain Smith's gardens at Houghton Castle, situated a few miles from Hexham, on the banks of the North Tyne river, was sent by his master to gather red currants for the house to be used for preserving. He commenced his labors on the bushes trained as riders on the north side of a wall which had been built about 6 years previously. When he reached the last bush, at the west end of the wall, he was much struck with the appearance of the fruit it bore, which was very superior, and larger than any of the other bushes. He at once went to his master, to ask him what sort of currant it was, who said he did not know but returned with Charlton to look at it. Mr. Gray then recollected that when he planted the wall he had a bush too few, and looking about the garden found a seedling growing under a gooseberry bush which he took up and planted, and which proved to be the

bush in question. The lad set to work and propagated it extensively, giving it to everyone, and when he commenced a nursery on his own account, regularly sold it as the Houghton Castle currant, under which name it was advertised in an early volume of the Chronicle. When, some 8 or 9 years ago, Mr. May, after being satisfied at Mr. Charlton's nursery, with the identity of it and his Victoria currant, was asked how and where he got his plants, he informed Mr. Charlton that he received the variety from the gardener at Raby Castle, whither it had been sent from the late Mr. Falla's nursery at Gateshead. Charlton had previously been regularly supplying Mr. Falla with plants. It is, therefore, an accidental seedling variety and is very generally cultivated in the gardens of Northumberland, where it is much esteemed and deservedly so."

Thomas Rivers' account bore out the above story. However, he added Goliath to the other three synonyms. (Thayer, 1923).

The other version of this story also comes from the Gardener's Chronicle (Ebor., 1866). The Raby Castle was brought to Raby by a Mr. Lindsay many years before. He got them from the neighborhood of Howick. A nurseryman in Yorkshire got the cuttings from someone (May, perhaps?) and was selling them as Victoria. This account agrees that

Houghton Castle originated as a chance seedling, but in a hedge in Yorkshire, not in a Northumberland garden.

Regardless of which version is correct, it should be clear that it was May's Victoria, not Victoria, that was involved in this complex situation. This is borne out by the fact that Bunyard (1917) was able to describe this as a distinct variety.

Origin unknown.

Bush straggling and uneven, fairly fertile. Leaf buds long, thin, dark brown, glabrous, divergent. Young leaves tinged brown. Mature leaves slightly yellow, held flat, lax, irregular. Petioles long. Flowers vulgare type, distinct ring. Petals markedly wedge-shaped. Rachis glabrous. Fruit bunches long, stem often 2 inches in length. Rachis glabrous, turns yellow (Bunyard, 1917).

#### Victoria Red

The origin of Victoria Red is unknown. According to the Proceedings of the APS (Anonymous, 1923), it was sold by Stone & Wellington, Toronto, Canada. The description given is too short and general for use in identification:

"Bunch extremely long; berry medium size, brilliant red, and of the highest quality."

#### Viking

G. G. Hahn, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, developed this variety (Anonymous, 1935). It is resistant



to white-pine blister rust, and it is also fairly drought-resistant. The Proceedings of the APS (Close, 1935) gave its origin as Norwegian. The description of Viking given below is adapted from that given in the Proceedings.

Bushes vigorous, rather large, upright, productive, and healthy. Young shoots bright red with light greenish brown bark. Racemes long, stems variable length, 15-20 flowers per raceme. Flowers pitcher-or bell-shaped. Fruit clusters tapering, rather loose. Berry medium, round to oblate, light bright red, skin thin, smooth, tough, translucent. Flesh juicy, sprightly, subacid. The variety belongs to the R. petraeum group and may be a hybrid.

#### Wanka

M. E. Hanson, Brookings, South Dakota, originated this variety from a wild black currant (Close, 1925). It was mentioned earlier in this paper (see the discussion of Mallow-leaved above).

"A very large plant bearing good crop of medium size fruit, which is red instead of black. Weight of 10 berries 9.3 grams." (Anonymous, 1925)

#### White Dutch

This, along with Red Dutch, is the earliest known cultivar. Hedrick (1925) traced its literature to Quintine



in 1690. Since its origin is uncertain, it is impossible to determine if the original variety is cultivated today. Nursery stocks have become thoroughly mixed, so one account gave the growth habit as "dwarf, compact, bushy" and in another account "the wood grows upright and strong." (Thayer, 1923)

John Saul, writing in The Horticulturist (1854) gave the following description: "Bunches of fair length; berries large, deep in color, and of high flavor...perhaps the finest of the White Currants."

A. F. Barron (1876) gave what may be the most accurate description of White Dutch: "Plant, leaves, etc., of exactly the same appearance as the Red Dutch.... Bunches large; berries large or very large, of a yellowish-white colour; very fine, juicy and sweet. A great cropper." *Blanche d'Hollande* is the only synonym listed by Barron.

#### White Grape

First mention of this variety occurred in an 1831 catalog of Kenrick Nurseries, Newton, Mass. (Thayer, 1923). Patrick Barry (1854) mentioned in The Horticulturist that the French name is Chasselas. It is often confused with White Dutch in the U. S.

Descriptions of this variety are remarkably uniform. The following account is derived from descriptions by Patrick Barry, Thomas Rivers, and E. P. Powell (Thayer, 1923).

"It is the largest and finest white currant grown, being distinctly larger than the White Dutch. The White

Dutch may be a little sweeter, but the White Grape is less seedy, larger and handsomer. The bunch is long; berries very large, pale, clear, without the creamy color of the more common so-called white currants; a superb table currant. The bush is a rather slow grower, more spreading than the White Dutch and somewhat irregular in form. The foliage is thicker, darker green and more reflexed than White Dutch which has pale green foliage and an erect habit. A very productive variety."

#### White Versailles

This variety was raised by M. Bertin a few years before 1883 near Versailles, France. He described it as being identical with Red Versailles "except that the fruit is a little less acid." John Charlton, Rochester, N. Y., sent a specimen of White Versailles to the N. Y. Experiment Station in 1893, saying that he had just received it from France. The Station's description is given here (Thayer, 1923): "A stout vigorous upright grower; bunch  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 inches long. Berries average large, a shade darker than White Grape in color. Pulp not quite so juicy but about the same acidity as White Grape."

#### Wilder

This variety is popular in the United States. E. Y. Teas, Irvington, Indiana, raised this variety from seeds of La Versaillaise in 1876. He selected the most desirable

specimen and named it Wilder in honor of Marshall P. Wilder, then president of the American Pomological Society. Teas sold 100 plants to Chapin & Willard (Thayer, 1923).

This description of Wilder is adapted from the Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society (Anonymous, 1924): Bushes medium size, sparsely branched. Shoots stout, brittle, tending to go "blind," early in breaking into leaf. Leaves a dull pale-green, flat, fairly thick. Flowers pale greenish-yellow with a faint fleshy ring in the center. Berries fairly large and the bunches long. Midseason or a little earlier.

#### Wilmot's Large White, Wilmot's New White

John Wilmot raised this variety and introduced it to the Horticultural Society of London. Volume four of their Proceedings (Anonymous, 1822) contains the following description: "It is paler than the common Red Currant, grows in large bunches and with berries considerably above the average size of the old sort, to which it is not inferior in sweetness."

#### Wood's Improved Cherry

The Proceedings of the APS (Anonymous, 1923) ranked this variety as Cherry.

#### Woolly-leaved Red

J. Grant, writing in Gardener's Chronicle (1869), gave the history of Woolly-leaved Red. According to him, it ori-

ginated in Scotland and was widely grown there. It was propagated for many years by Messrs. Dickson & Sons, Howick, N. B. (Grant, 1869).

This is a late variety, ripening with Raby Castle. Leaves and fruit hang late. Berries large, dark red to almost purple (M'Lachlan, 1868).

#### Yellow Champagne

William R. Prince listed this variety in Moore's Rural New-Yorker (1859) without a description.

#### Yellow Dutch

Switzer's "Practical Fruit gardener," (Thayer, 1923) contained the first reference to this variety: "The great White Dutch and the Great Red Dutch Currants are the fairest, largest, and best; and the great Yellow Dutch Currant differs only in colour." This is probably a yellow variant of a red variety.

#### Yellow-Stemmed Red Holland

According to the Gartenflora (1896), this variety is similar to Holland Red, except that its stems are yellow at full maturity (Thayer, 1923).

## RECENT TAXONOMIC SYSTEMS; A DISCUSSION

### Bunyard's System

By the early part of the twentieth century, the nomenclatural tangle had become almost impenetrable. From 1915 to 1924, three major works on the classification of Ribes cultivars were produced. Edward A. Bunyard wrote a letter to the Gardener's Chronicle (1915) requesting growers to send in flowering branches of the bushes they grew as Red Dutch. He had found that the variety grown on the Continent as Red Dutch was known by him as Prince Albert. Later, Bunyard published "The History and Development of the Red Currant" (1916-17), which has been discussed above. He published "A Revision of the Red Currants" in the Gardener's Chronicle (1917). This is a determined, and nearly successful, attempt to classify the well-known varieties according to the parent species. Bunyard considered three species to be ancestral to all cultivated red currants: Ribes vulgare, petraeum, and rubrum. The cultivars were divided into six groups. Five groups were related to parent species. The sixth group consisted of varieties not fitting into any of the other five groups. According to Bunyard's system, R. rubrum pubescens was the parent species of the Raby Castle group. This group contained Raby Castle and Houghton Castle. The Versailles group contained 13 varieties: Versailles, Cherry, Fay's Prolific, Rouge de Boulogne, Caucasiche, Red Cross, North Star, Comet, Chenonceau, Warner's Grape,



Belle de St. Gilles, Perfection (of American origin), and Wilder. These were, according to Bunyard, descendents of "the so-called R. macrocarpa, probably a large form of Ribes vulgare." The Gondouin group, including Gondouin, Prince Albert, Goegginger's Pyriform, and Seedless Red, was derived from R. petraeum according to Bunyard. For evidence, he cited the stout stems, long buds, red campanulate flowers, and stout coriaceous leaves characteristic of R. petraeum. Gondouin had earlier been given specific status (R. gondouini) by Janczewski (Berger, 1924). Janczewski also designated Prince Albert as a R. petraeum x vulgare hybrid. The Scotch group included Scotch, La Constante, Moore's Ruby, and Chiswick Red. It contains descendents of R. rubrum. He based this group upon rubrum characteristics such as stiff upfolded leaves, stiff wiry rachis, and the (more or less) bell-shaped flowers held at right angles to the rachis. The Dutch group is descended from R. vulgare, according to Bunyard, but he recognized that members of the group also contained macrocarpa characteristics. The system is not inclusive, however. Bunyard listed four varieties as not classifiable under the five groups: Knight's Red, Victoria, La Turinoise, and Fertility.

By relating cultivars with parent species, Bunyard linked cultivar classification with normal botanical classification. Although his system is not perfect, it represents a definite step in the effort to make a referable system for the cultivars of red currants.



### Thayer's System

Paul Thayer attempted to clear the nomenclature of red and white currants in the experiment-station plots at Wooster, Ohio. In his work, Thayer reviewed more than a thousand references, making his the most complete survey of the currant literature up to 1923. In this endeavor, Thayer tried to find accurate original descriptions and detailed histories of the varieties. He hoped that, by obtaining this information from the early horticultural literature, accurate identification would be possible. Although Thayer's plan for identification of currant cultivars was partially foiled by inadequate or nonexistent varietal descriptions, his work suggested the important role of historical research in horticultural taxonomy. Part Two of Thayer's publication (1923) is concerned with identification and description of the cultivars as they grew in the Ohio Station plots during the time of Thayer's study. Illustrations include photographs of flowering or fruiting branches and individual leaves to show variations in leaf shape and size. Thayer, like Bunyard, arranged the cultivars into groups according to parent species.

### Berger's System

Alwin Berger worked on the currants at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva, N. Y.. One of his duties was "to study the botany of the considerable

collection of species and varieties of fruits now growing at this Station;..." (Berger, 1924).

Berger (1924) first divided the currants and gooseberries into two genera: Ribes (currants) and Grossularia (gooseberries) within the family Grossulariaceae. He recognized eight subgenera of Ribes, one of which was Ribesia, the red currants. Berger reduced R. vulgare sylvestre Lamarck to a synonym of R. rubrum Linnaeus. Progenitors of the cultivars include three species, one variety, and four interspecific hybrids. The species are R. sativum, rubrum, and petraeum. The variety listed is R. sativum var. macrocarpum. R. houghtonianum is a rubrum x sativum hybrid. R. pallidum is a petraeum x rubrum hybrid. R. holosericeum is a R. petraeum caucasicum x rubrum hybrid. R. gondouini is a petraeum x sativum hybrid.

Varieties in the R. sativum group cultivated at the Station included Chautauqua, Diploma, Filler, Red Cross, Versailles, and Wilder. According to Berger, these varieties belong in the Dutch group of Bunyard.

The R. sativum var. macrocarpum group included Cherry, Everybody's, Fay's Prolific, Giant Red, and Ruby. These varieties belong in the Versailles group of Bunyard.

R. houghtonianum group included Knight's Large Red, North Star, Perfection, and Red Dutch. Bunyard (1917) listed North Star and Perfection in the Versailles group.

Varieties in the R. rubrum group included London Market

and Victoria. The Raby Castle group and the Scotch group of Bunyard contain these varieties.

R. pallidum variety Prince Albert was the only representative of this group grown at the Station.

No R. holosericeum cultivars were grown at the Station when Berger made the study.

The R. gondouini group corresponds to the Gondouin group of Bunyard. Berger (1924) mentioned Gondouin Red as one of the varieties, but none of this group was cultivated at the Station.

These three systems have significantly untangled the nomenclature of red and white currants. For some varieties there will always be doubt concerning origins. For modern currant varieties, however, the descriptions are specific enough to be useful taxonomically. Unfortunately, mistakes at the nursery constitute a perennial threat to purity of the cultivars. With more adequate descriptions, however, the problem can be eliminated.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The cultivars of Ribes are not old, as compared with other cultivated fruits. The first cultivated red currants appeared during the last two decades of the fifteenth century. The Low Countries and the plains of the Baltic are probably centers of origin. Improvement began with the introduction of Red Dutch and White Dutch. As the number of varieties gradually increased, nomenclature became more and more con-

fused. At the close of the nineteenth century, this confusion had reached mammoth proportions. Three taxonomists--E. A. Bunyard, Paul Thayer, and Alvin Berger--devised taxonomic systems for cultivars of currants and gooseberries.

Nomenclatural confusion appears to have two causes: (1) popularity of currant cultivars and (2) neglect of nursery stocks. In Europe the first reason is dominant. Nurserymen, eager to sell as many plants as possible, attempted to originate superior new varieties. In many cases, their "new" seedling varieties were faithful copies of the parent varieties. Of course, some outright name-changing may also have taken place. In the United States, both factors operated to some extent. The tremendous surge of popularity during the last 30 years of the nineteenth century produced the chaotic situation leading to the classification systems of Thayer and Berger. Simultaneously, neglect of nursery stocks led to the mixture of varieties.

At the present time, currant taxonomy is relatively simple. Ten or 12 varieties of red currants and two or three white varieties are offered by U. S. nurseries. In Europe, since Bunyard, the nomenclatural tangle has cleared considerably. Cytology and comparative anatomy, as well as biochemical analysis, are possible sources of new taxonomic evidence.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A number of people were important to the success of this study. In particular, I wish to thank the following persons for their aid: Dr. Theodore M. Barkley, Kansas State University, my major professor and confidant in times of perplexity; Dr. George B. Van Schaak, Missouri Botanical Garden, whose wise guidance and special consideration were valuable to this work; Dr. George L. Slate, New York State Agricultural Experiment Station; Floyd A. Swink, The Norton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois; Richard A. Howard, The Arnold Arboretum, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts; William I. P. Campbell, The Botanic Garden of Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts; Leon S. Snyder, University of Minnesota, St. Paul; Art Ode, Boerner Botanical Garden, Hales Corners, Wisconsin; and Mrs. Rosemary Burroughs, Kansas State University, whose advice and aid in the chromatographic work greatly facilitated that part of the study.

## APPENDIX

A CHROMATOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF THE LEAF  
ANTHOCYANIDINS OF SOME RED AND WHITE  
CURRANT CULTIVARS

INTRODUCTION

The taxonomic systems discussed in the preseding paper were based on morphological evidence. With the advent of convenient tests for chemical compounds produced by plants, this source of evidence has been explored for various groups of plants.

Leaf anthocyanins are relatively easy to analyze chromatographically. Their preparation for use in chromatography is fairly simple, and the red color of the anthocyanidins on the chromatogram makes color-development processes unnecessary.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The plant materials used in this study were obtained from the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva, N. Y. The varieties used in the tests are listed below.

Cherry  
Rote Spotless  
London Market  
Rondom  
Red Cross  
Diploma  
White Imperial  
Viking

Laxton #1  
N. Y. 2110  
Minnesota 71  
Red Lake  
Stephens #9  
Minnesota 52  
Wilder  
Pomona

Dried and pressed specimans were obtained from the

Station. Leaves for the chromatographic analysis were taken eight to 10 inches below the growing points of the stems. These leaves were full-grown and of average size for the variety.

One-half gram of dried leaf tissue was used for each sample. The samples were ground in a mortar with sand as an abrasive. The grinding and extracting solution was 1% HCl in methanol (v:v). Ten ml of this solution were used for each sample.

Hydrolysis of the anthocyanins was effected by adding 10 ml of 1N HCl to the HCl-methanol solution and heating in a steam bath for 15 minutes. The anthocyanidins were then isolated by adding iso-amyl alcohol to the hydrolyzed solution. Spots were made on Whatman No. 1 chromatographic paper, and 100 lambda-ml (0.1 ml) of iso-amyl alcohol solution were used for each spot.

Forestral solvent (acetic acid-concentrated HCl-water in a 30:3:10 v:v:v ratio) was used in the descending chromatography. This technique is adapted from Stafford (1965).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The cultivars tested in this experiment were qualitatively uniform in anthocyanidin content. Each variety tested contained one anthocyanidin with Rf 0.41.

Three gooseberry varieties were also tested: Welcome, Downing, and Fredonia. They contained the same anthocyanidins as the currant varieties. The white currant, White Imperial,



contained the same anthocyanidin as the red varieties. Fruit color, then, is not necessarily associated with presence or absence of anthocyanins in the leaves. No attempt was made to identify the anthocyanidin, since the differences in profile were more important taxonomically than the identity of the compounds.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Anthocyanidins do not appear to be useful in separating currant cultivars. On the contrary, they appear to demonstrate rather well the close relationship of Ribes cultivars--and species. More research into chemical characteristics would be needed to determine if this is a useful source of taxonomic evidence.

A HISTORY OF THE TAXONOMY AND A CATALOG  
OF RED AND WHITE CURRANTS

by

RICHARD ERNEST VOELTZ

B. S., Kansas State University, 1964

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ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Botany

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Manhattan, Kansas

1967

The cultivated varieties of red and white currants are descendents of species native to the cool, moist regions of northern Europe and Asia. The red currant was probably first cultivated in the fifteenth century for medicinal purposes. Holland and the plains of the Baltic were probably the original centers of cultivation. Accounts in the herbals suggest a gradual increase in size and quality of the fruit.

Similarity in appearance of currant cultivars resulted in confusion of names among the cultivars. The situation worsened during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Several classification systems, devised during the first quarter of the twentieth century, have grouped cultivars with the putative parent species.

A survey of the leaf anthocyanidins of some red and white currant cultivars suggested that this is a rather uniform characteristic. All of the cultivars surveyed contained one anthocyanidin. The chromatographic profile indicated it to be the same anthocyanidin in all cases.